

BLACK



and RED

NUMBER 6

Newsletter of the Anarchist Caucus, CoC

JULY/AUGUST 1993

NATIONAL HEALTH PLAN NOW!@!

Confused over Bill Clinton's "health-care reform?" You're not the only one. When Bill was on the road, he promised to draft a health-care plan during his first 100 days in office. He reiterated that pledge during his February speech to a joint session of the Congress.

Now, most experts view action on health-care unlikely until late this fall. "I'm just not sure anymore about what the direction is," said Ed Rothschild, a spokesperson for Citizen Action, a consumer group that has lobbied the administration for a "single payer" system like Canada's. "We're hearing so many things from so many different places... You wonder whether they are backtracking or what."

The core of Clinton's "reform" is the idea that each of the states would establish large insurance purchasing cooperatives ("health alliances") into which individuals and employers would pay money. The "health alliances" would then buy insurance for the members from various plans offered. Large companies would be allowed to opt out of this system. They would still be required to buy a government-set package of health benefits for their workers.

This is how the system would work in theory. Many health experts, however, are skeptical that the Clinton scheme is nothing more than a rip-off by big insurance companies.



Clinton is not fooling everyone. Writing in "New York Newsday" columnist Robert Reno explains the scam:

"It will preserve the two great myths embedded in the present system: that the private insurance carriers and their immense, overlapping bureaucracies are somehow indispensable to the good health of the nation as the doctors, nurses, diagnostic machines and wonder drugs that actually save and prolong our lives, and that there is some compelling medical, social or economic reason why a person's health care coverage should be linked to a person's job."

Says Reno, "For years, Americans have been encouraged to swoon and have socialistic

nightmares at the very idea of a single-payer system, even as most industrial nations have been adopting it with the result that, in every case, their people live longer and spend less on health care than we do... Basically, what is going to drive the nation toward a single-payer system is when the public realizes that it's the best hope of controlling costs and preserving free choice of doctors, and when businessmen—who now generally oppose it—finally get around to realizing that it is in their interest to unload the whole mess on the government. And once they get a look at the necessary complexity of the Clinton plan, the sheer simplicity of a single-payer system will begin to look more and more appealing."

FOOD NOT BOMBS
IS HARASSED IN BOSTON

On April 17, Food Not Bombs of Boston rallied against an April 2nd police attack on their food distribution on the Boston Common, during which the Boston police siezed a folding table and a pot of hot soup. Food Not Bombs in Boston has been serving these free meals for the hungry for 13 years and this was the first such police attack. Apparently the city recently decided this activity is against the law.

In response to the police action, the "Boston Globe" ran an editorial defending the right of "people of all races and classes" to enjoy the parks...

At the April 17 rally, which had about 50 people in attendance, FNB activists explained their position. "I understand that people don't want to see the homeless," one activist explained, "It is upsetting to see others in a state of destitution. But if you don't want to see homelessness, please don't shove us off in a corner, do something about it. We can quench peoples' hunger by feeding them and that in itself is a tremendous act. But if we ever want to solve the problem on a large scale, we need to make it visible."

Another participant in the rally explained that they think this harassment is related to other poverty-related problems in Amerikan society such as the mental health industry. "I'm involved in the movement for survivors of the mental health system," this activist explained. "When I've been short of dollars I've eaten at Boston Common. The right to food is so basic and the mental health system enslaves people because they are poor. Mental health and psychiatry are calling people ill because of things that have to do with poverty."

Boston Food Not Bombs can be contacted c/o Weinberg, 955 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139. (617) 522-1241.

[This report was adapted from an article in the May '93 issue of "MIM Notes," PO Box 3567, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.]

The 1993 Mid-Atlantic

Anarchist
Gathering

An Anarchist Gathering's purpose is to provide the means, time and space for furthering the ideas and actions of anarchism. This is accomplished by providing the space to have lectures, discussion groups, workshops, and networking. The range of topics is usually wide. Labor, squatting, communications, organization, history, publications, art, children, and women's self-health are a few of the subjects that have been raised at recent gatherings.

In recent history there were continental gatherings from 1986-1989. After the last, in San Francisco, which drew two thousand people, no group has felt they had the resources to host such a large event. Regional gatherings have happened since in California, Vancouver, Seattle and the Mid-West. All of these events have been open to anyone to attend and though donations are solicited, have been free of charge.

Help plan the 1993 Mid-Atlantic Anarchist Gathering! It will be happening in Philadelphia in the summer of 1993 from July 30 - August 2. We expect to draw 700 to 1000 people from the region.

A collective to plan the Gathering has been meeting since October 1992 on the first and third Sundays of each month. We really want more energetic and inspired folks to come to meetings and help put this thing together. We meet at the @ Space, 4722 Baltimore Avenue in West Philly. (Take the #34 trolley west from City Hall & get off at 47th & Baltimore.) If you need more info or directions, call the Wooden Shoe Bookstore at (215) 569-2477.

The Gathering will be at the Lea School at 48th & Spruce Streets.. The space will be rented from the Philadelphia School District for about \$1250.00 the four days. We also need to get a temporary insurance policy to do this for about \$1000.

With other costs such as food, housing & mailings, we will need to raise about \$5000 in advance of the Gathering. So far we have raised about two-thirds of that.

We are also planning for food preparation. Keep it in mind if you have access to lots of food that is preservable until the summer or if you'll have sources when the Gathering is occurring.

All events at the Lea School & food will be free. The mailing address for the Gathering is P.O. Box 31889, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

Please get in touch and make it happen!

The following article was reprinted from the April 1993 issue of "Bulletin IDOM," 27 Union Square West, Second Floor Room 208, New York, New York. Subscription is \$24.00 for 12 monthly issues.

Revolutionary Socialists and the Committees of Correspondence

by Alex Chis and Malik Miah

The following article on the importance of the Committees of Correspondence for revolutionary socialists was written by Alex Chis and Malik Miah, members of the BIDOM Editorial Board and elected leaders of the Northern California Committees of Correspondence. Chis and Miah are also members of Activists for Independent Socialist Politics, which publishes the quarterly magazine, Independent Politics (\$8.00 for four issues; send to: P.O. Box 78241, San Francisco, CA 94107).

Why should revolutionary socialists join and build the Committees of Correspondence (CoC)? The CoC was formed one year ago by former members of the U.S. Communist Party. It held a national conference in Berkeley, California, in July 1992, attended by 1,300 people. It has since grown to nearly 2,000 members, a majority never having been members of the CP. Activists from most left traditions are members, from Trotskyist and Social Democratic to Maoist and anarchist. The former CP leaders openly reject Stalinism and advocate democratic functioning.

Yet there are many socialists not from the CP tradition who reject the CoC as nothing more than Stalinism in a new set of clothes. They believe people can't change, or if they can, it isn't for the better. The fact that the Soviet Union has split apart, with Stalinism worldwide in retreat and disintegration, is irrelevant to these self-proclaimed pure socialists.

An example of this sectarianism toward the CoC was seen in a letter published in the February BIDOM. "These oppositionists," writes Marc Vigilmo, "recently booted out of the CP by their fellow Stalinists, are bad news. They're just as bad as, if not worse than, Gus Hall and company. These are the same people who have preached class-collaboration at every election season, misleading workers into voting for 'lesser-evil' imperialists. There's no sign that they're going to change. If anything, they're going to imitate their fellow Stalinists in the East European and West European CPs by turning into social-democrats." Clearly, for Vigilmo past errors are permanent. Once a Stalinist always a Stalinist.

Facts Are Stubborn

But facts are stubborn things. Change is possible and is occurring. People from all political traditions are being influenced by the historic changes in the world and are now re-examining previously long held beliefs. They are discussing the lessons of the demise of the Soviet Union. They are discussing whether the end of Stalinism as we've known it means the end of socialism. Was the 1917 Revolution a mistake? Does Leninism lead to

Stalinism? And many other fundamental questions.

All serious socialists are involved in these discussions. Those who simply say, "There is nothing new to discuss because Stalinism never was socialism," are missing the point. The world changes mean a serious discussion on Marxism is possible. What type of socialism are we for? What type of organization is needed to lead the revolution? What type of party and state after the revolution has won? These are not simple questions. Why? Because the urgent task of the working class and the oppressed is to end capitalist rule. The aggression of Washington around the world and the international recession makes that clear.

It is in this context that those calling themselves revolutionary socialists must reject dogmatism and sectarianism. We must work with other socialists to rebuild a mass socialist movement — here and worldwide. That must be our number one objective.

The Committees of Correspondence is seeking to begin that process in the United States. That's its objective. Considering the divisions on the left, it is a huge undertaking. The CoC leadership, an evolving formation, doesn't pretend to have the answer to how to do it. But it openly states that old methods are not the solution. That the left needs to get together and talk it out. We don't need a debate over our past errors and views. What we need now is a discussion of how we can move forward. We need to discuss politics and how to recapture the socialist perspective that has been "stolen" by the Stalinists like Gus Hall, or the sectarians, like the ex-Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party and other self-proclaimed "communists." Unless we do so it will be impossible to rebuild a mass revolutionary movement.

In the "Declaration of Principles" adopted at the July 1992 conference this vision of the CoC is outlined clearly: "The initiators of the Committees of Correspondence are predominantly people with a socialist vision and a Marxist view of history. Yet we are convinced that we can and must build an organization that is pluralist, embracing members who have theoretical frameworks other than Marxist. Recent history makes us believe that there must be tolerance, and even more,

genuine mutual respect and equality among differing activist views."

"Therefore," it adds later, "we are both Marxist and pluralist. We believe different strands of socialist and democratic thought can coexist and enrich each other within the context of a shared political program and practice."

It is for this fundamental reason that the members of Activists for Independent Socialist Politics, initiated by a group of former members of Socialist Action last August, joined the Committees of Correspondence and are actively building it. In the six months that we have been doing so, primarily in the San Francisco Bay Area, the results have been impressive. They confirm our belief that all serious socialists, all those from the Trotskyist tradition, should be members and active builders of the CoC. We should take responsibility for the future direction of the organization. We are not "member observers" of the former CP leaders. It is our organization as much as theirs. That must be our approach. Not to do so is sectarianism and would lead to missing an historic opportunity.

Our Experiences

What have been our experiences?

In the Bay Area there are over 550 members of the CoC. We are organized into 11 branches and many task forces. These task forces include labor, youth, women, gay and lesbian, environmental, peace and solidarity, African-American, Asian/Pacific, and Latino.

The San Francisco branch meetings are monthly. Most political traditions in the city are represented. We have social democrats, ex-Maoists, Trotskyists, anarchists, and of course ex-CPers. We have greens and independent activists from the solidarity movements and other community struggles. The steering committee is made up of volunteers who prepare the meeting agenda. No one is excluded from leadership tasks.

Our political discussions are wide ranging because of the newness of the group. Most of us have never worked together before. It is a learning process. The emphasis is on democratic discussion. All of us have experienced

bureaucratic functioning in previous organizations.

A case in point concerned the National Coordinating Committee adopting an anti-Bush position before the last presidential elections. Our branch voted to send a letter of protest to the NCC for not consulting with the entire membership first. The proposal came from a young former CPer.

While most of our first six months has been devoted to getting ourselves organized and setting up structure, members are reaching out to win new recruits and are involved in activity. Most activity is done wearing other "hats" but the CoC is raised. Everyone knows that their individual radical activity is not enough to change society — a national left/socialist formation is needed. That's why they have joined the CoC, with the aim of building such a formation. Few youth joined socialist groups in the 1980s, so the average age of the CoC is on the older side right now. But the prospects for growth are there, especially when the CoC starts doing things in its own name and begins actively trying to recruit members.

It has to be realized that the growth in the CoC, about 100 members a month nationally, has been almost entirely without any specific organizational effort. People from around the country hear about this development and send in their money. In some areas CoC chapters have been formed that have no ex-CP members in them at all, and this fact was reported as a positive development at the recent NCC meeting. This year for the first time the CoC is going to start a membership drive and conduct more activity in the name of the CoC.

The first public forum in the CoC name in the Bay Area was organized in January by the Labor Task Force, one of the best organized of the CoC task forces. It was a forum on "Independent Politics," with speakers from five of the independent party formations, and some 200 people attended, with new members signing up for the CoC.

The Oakland CoC is an example of how the CoC combines activity and discussion. There was a discussion around the November 1992 elections. Although there was no common position that could be taken on the major races, comrades still wanted to do something around the elections. We decided to do a human billboarding for the "Tax the Rich" proposition on the California ballot. It was something everyone agreed on, and helped us come together around a common project.

Oakland's most recent activity has been the Pro-Choice Rally in Redding, CA. More than a dozen CoC members from the Oakland chapter alone traveled over 200 miles to Redding for the rally, with other CoCers coming from San Francisco, Sacramento, and other

areas. A Bay Area-wide women's action task force has resulted from this work. This is an example not only of how vital work can be carried out through the CoC, but also concretely how the CoC is clearly not the same as the old CP. The Redding action and the Bay Area Women's Action Task Force are welcomed in the CoC, in contrast to the CP's past positions. This is also noticeable in the support given the National Lesbian/Gay Task Force.

In the Oakland chapter we have many political tendencies: ex-CP recent, ex-CP from decades ago, ex-RCP, ex-Line of March, former members of different Trotskyist groups, and people who have never been involved in a general left organization before. Our task is to continue to welcome those from all perspectives and to begin to reach out to the youth. We've had discussions from the situation in Somalia to the prospects for change in Oakland. With 110 members, we have never tried to recruit anyone yet, having concentrated until now on getting ourselves organized and beginning public activity. Our next job is to reach out to the campuses, have more forums, and start to build the kind of organization the left needs in the U.S.

National Debate and Convention

The political debate in the CoC is just getting under way. It will be a discussion on the character of the organization and its perspectives. The NCC voted to hold the founding convention in late spring or early summer of 1994. For even this relatively small change from the originally projected date for the conference of the winter of 1994, the NCC voted to have a membership referendum. If this new date is approved by the membership, it will mean an 18-month preconvention verbal and written discussion.

That discussion has already begun informally in the branches in the Bay Area. It took a more formal turn at the February 20 Northern California all-membership meeting of the Committees. The meeting was organized to complete the process of electing a new leadership for the region, to bring together area CoCers, and to begin the discussion for the 1994 convention. At it a panel discussion was organized where different points of view on the relationship of the CoC to the left were presented, including what type of organization the CoC should be.

Three of the contributions touched on the main issues facing the national organization. One comrade, a former member of the ex-Line of March (Maoist) organization, outlined her view that the CoC should not be an organization. Instead it should be a network. And that it should do little activity in its own name over the next 18 months until this issue is resolved. She raised questions about call-

ing the CoC socialist since most progressives don't use that term.

A former CP leader and the main leader of the Bay Area CoC indicated her view was that the group should be for the socialist vision but wasn't sure that the name socialist should be in our name. She said the CoC should be an activist organization and multinational in its makeup and aims. She also rejected the CoC being a Leninist vanguard party.

The third view, which we support, outlined seven points. First, the CoC should be explicitly for socialism. This is crucial because of the attempts of Stalinists like Gus Hall to keep the mantle, and because socialism is the only world view to counter capitalism. Second, the CoC should be internationalist and reach out to other organizations fighting for similar objectives. Third, the CoC should be an activist organization. That is the only way to recruit youth and other militant-minded people. Fourth, the CoC should launch a national newspaper. In January, Northern California leaders of the CoC launched a monthly newspaper called, "News for a People's World." It is not a CoC publication but is being used by CoC members in an aggressive manner. Two members of the AISP are on the editorial board of the paper. Fifth, the CoC should be democratic and controlled by its membership. It should not be democratic-centralist in the way that has been practiced by vanguard organizations. It must be open and allow members to express differences as they build the group. Sixth, the CoC should be an organization, and not a network. And lastly, the CoC should have a working class base and orientation.

The discussion at the meeting focused on many of the seven points. In general most speakers agreed the CoC should be an activist organization, and not a loose network. There was more give-and-take on whether it should be explicitly socialist. Everyone agreed this is an important discussion and should be seriously organized nationally and by the Northern California leadership body. Almost every speaker stressed the need for the CoC to do more in its own name.

These type of discussions will continue to take place in the CoC prior to the founding convention. The national CoC will publish written discussion bulletins. Discussion pieces have already appeared in the "Dialogue & Initiative" quarterly. There are ample opportunities for progressives and socialists from the Trotskyist traditions to join this discussion. The question is, "Do we want to?" We say, "Yes!" If we want to be listened to and be effective, revolutionary socialists must be members and builders of the CoC □

February 28, 1993

STAN MACK'S REAL LIFE FUNNIES

GUARANTEE: ALL DIALOGUE IN PEOPLE'S OWN WORDS

THE SHADOW OF HIS SMILE

I'M WORKING AT "THE NEW YORK PLANET." WE DO GOOD, HARD HITTING LOCAL NEWS, NOT LIKE THOSE NO-NEWS, SMUG, OTHER DOWNTOWN WEEKLIES.



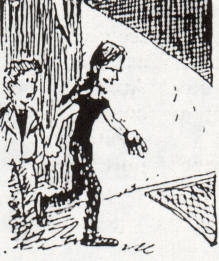
WHEN I WALK BY THE PARK, I FEEL AGAIN THAT GOOD ANGER... WHEN REVOLUTION WAS IN THE AIR AND "THE SHADOW" COVERED IT!



FOND MEMORIES OF CLASHES WITH THE CITY OF FLYING BOTTLES AND BONFIRES, RAIDS ON THE CHRISTODORA, THE OCCUPATIONS OF ABC, AND DINKINS' OFFICE.



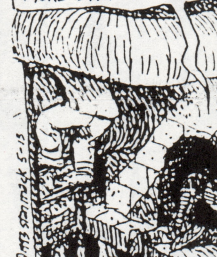
AND WHEN THEY TRASHED THE HOMELESS AND CLOSED THE PARK, EVERYONE - FAMILIES AND KIDS - JOINED US IN THE STREET.



BUT THE PEOPLE AT THE FRONT OF THE MOVEMENT FOUGHT AMONG THEMSELVES, AND THE SCENE DIED, AND I STOPPED PUBLISHING.



THIS SPRING I CAN SMELL THE ACTIVITY, SEE THE REEMERGENCE OF THE MOVEMENT WITH NEW, MORE DARING FACES.



THE "PLANET" WEARS A VELVET GLOVE, BUT THE SHADOW IS AN IRON FIST! IT'S ANTI-GOVERNMENT, IT STRETCHES THE FIRST AMENDMENT.



I'VE BEEN GETTING TONS OF MAIL FROM AROUND THE WORLD. I CALLED MY HOTLINES AND REPORTERS, THEY ALL SAID, "LET'S DO IT."



I CALLED THE LAWYERS: KUNSTLER, KUBY, COHEN, AND SAID "THE SHADOW" IS COMING OUT AGAIN! IT'S GONNA FEEL GREAT...

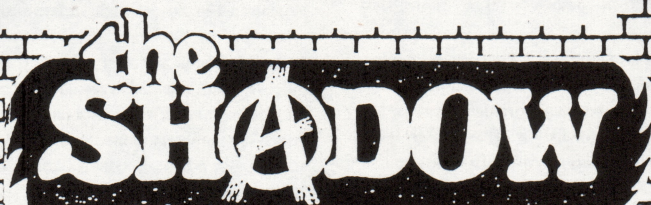


TO SAY: SMASH THE CURFEW! FUCK THE FASCIST PIGS! PAGAN IS A COCKROACH!



VOICE May 25, 1993

RETURN OF...



INFORMATION IS STRENGTH • KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

New York City's popular anarchist underground newspaper is back!@! After a six-month hiatus, "The Shadow" has resumed publication. Editor Chris Flash explained "We hope to resume our bi-monthly schedule by the end of the year. Many of our readers' favorite writers and artists have signed on to the project."

The journal is a primary source for information on the Lower East Side (East Village) activist scene. For subscription info and a complimentary copy write to: "The Shadow" PO Box 20298, New York, New York 10009.

Re-printed below is an important statement of support for the LA4+ defendants that was published recently in the "Los Angeles Sentinel." Refuse & Resist! is asking progressive organizations to re-print it, and to acquaint their readers with the case.

End the Discriminatory Prosecution of the LA4+ Defendants

Once Again They Target Black Youth

Imagine yourself as a young Black man in Los Angeles, singled out by President Bush in a nationally televised address. A Justice Department task force makes its major task the selection of the defendants in your case. Former L.A. Police Chief Daryl Gates personally makes the first arrest in a media circus. The F.B.I. raids homes and holds people hostage to force the production of home video tapes. You are charged with attempted murder and aggravated mayhem, charges never applied to police officers and whites accused in similar incidents.

Your bail is pushed up to \$580,000. The DA's office secretly videotapes your supporters as they leave the courtroom. The Justice Department sends agents to take notes in your defense committee meetings. One of your original attorneys withdraws a motion to exclude illegally obtained evidence, and is revealed to work for a convicted con artist who then claims he was acting on orders from the federal government. Then all gang-related charges against the LA4+ defendants are suddenly dropped and the principal police witness in those charges is himself under investigation.

You have been held for a year in a maximum security cell 23½ hours a day with a light on all night, and transported in shackles and chains. When your supporters take your case to the public with a press conference and leafleting, they are set upon by police who fire rubber bullets into the crowd in a scene reminiscent of South Africa or the West Bank.

We are talking about the case of the LA4+, the young Black men accused in the attack on a white truck driver on April 29, 1992. Their treatment stands in abject contrast to the leniency afforded to the four police officers who beat Rodney King.

Unwilling to admit the real reasons for the explosion of anger from below, the Bush administration sought from the beginning to paint the Los Angeles events as the work of "gang members" and "criminal opportunists." Driven by political considerations, thousands of dollars and a small army of federal agents have been poured into the prosecution of the Denny beating — a single non-fatal incident in a mass uprising that resulted in over 12,000 arrests and fifty deaths.

The Government seems concerned that, in contrast to the urban insurrections of the sixties, in Los Angeles poor

Latinos, Blacks, and even a number of whites took to the streets. Stung by the Rodney King video tape, the incident with the white truck driver embodied the alternative image the administration in Washington wanted to project: Black youth assaulting passing whites.

Whether one called the tumultuous spring of 1992 in Los Angeles a riot or a rebellion, it shook the social fabric of America. It forced into the open disturbing questions about the conditions of life for millions on the bottom, and it unsettled a government that uses Los Angeles as its testing ground for new and sterner forms of police control.

This largest mass arrest in U.S. history, together with the summary deportation of over 1,000, involved a shameful breakdown in the standards of justice and due process that were documented in the ACLU's study *Civil Liberties in Crisis: Los Angeles During the Emergency*.

Now, a year later, the battle for public opinion is concentrated in the politically driven prosecution of a single group of young Black men. We do not condone the attack on the truck driver or any other innocent party. But we do reject the government's claim that retaliatory acts of oppressed people are the same, or even worse, than calculated brutality by trained professional enforcers of the status quo. And we reject policies aimed at the wholesale criminalization of Black and Latino youth.

We ask: Must the young men of LA4+ now go to JAIL FOR LIFE as scapegoats to validate the government's bogus "theory" of the Los Angeles rebellion? How can we conscience this after the white police officers who beat Rodney King were charged with far less severe crimes, were given token bail, were freed in their first trial, and have yet to spend a night in jail?

We say enough is enough. We cannot turn our backs on what is happening until the fire next time. Since April 1992 the government has done nothing to get to the root causes of the rebellion, but has instead offered up more repression and tougher new laws and penalties. Nothing will be gained by pursuing this selective and vindictive prosecution. Instead what is needed is a thorough investigation of the political origins of this discriminatory prosecution and an end to the police practices that led to the events of last April.

Mumia Abu-Jamal
Revolutionary death row journalist,
Huntington, PA
James Bernard
Senior Editor, *Source Magazine*, NY
Naomi Bradley
Community activist, Los Angeles
Dennis Brutus
Visiting Distinguished Humanist
U. of Colorado, Boulder*
John Brown Childs
Professor, UC-Santa Cruz*
Robbie Conal
Guerrilla artist, Los Angeles
Mary B. Cox
Columnist, *News Dimensions**
(an African paper), Washington, DC
B. Kwaku Duren, Esq.
Afro-American independent political
activist, Los Angeles
Peter Erlinder
President-Elect, Nat'l Lawyers Guild*
Susan Ferron
National Secretary, Refuse & Resist!,
New Orleans, LA

Roland Freeman
Former Black Panther, Los Angeles
Don Jackson
Civil rights activist, Penn State Univ.*
Iris Johnson-Bright
National Conference of Black Lawyers*,
Los Angeles
Morris Kight
Convener, Gay & Lesbian Peace Concerns
Los Angeles
C. Clark Kissinger
Writer, *Revolutionary Worker*
William Kunstler
Attorney, New York
James Lafferty
Exec. Director, Los Angeles Chapter,
National Lawyers Guild
David Lester
Filmmaker, Los Angeles
Don Lewis
Professor, Cal State-Dominguez Hills*
Loyola Black Law Students Association
Los Angeles
Yolanda Madison
Chair, African Student Union, UCLA

Haki Madhubuti
Poet, publisher, and community
activist, Chicago
National Lawyers Guild,
Los Angeles Chapter
Pastor M. Andrew Robinson-Gaither
Faith United Methodist Church,*
Los Angeles
Ricardo Sánchez
La Resistencia, Pullman, WA
Cleveland Sasser
Democratic Socialists of America*
Atlanta, GA
Charles Simmons
Professor, Cal State-LA*
Frank Stricker
Professor, Cal State-Dominguez Hills*
Oba T'Shaka
Chair, Black Studies, SESU
Nat'l Vice Chair, Black United Front*
Nat Williams & Ronnie Brown
Los Angeles Refuse & Resist!
Victor Wolfenstein
Professor, UCLA*
*Organization for purposes of identification only

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To sign this statement, to contribute toward its publication, or to receive more information:
Refuse & Resist!, 6253 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 910, Los Angeles, CA 90028. Phone 213-962-8084. Fax 213-962-4437

END THE EM BAR GO



REFUSE & RESIST! 'S L.A. REBELLION SUPPORT PROJECT

We opened a week after the Rebellion to:
1) help defend those arrested and demand
AMNESTY for ALL,

2) expose and fight the continuing
clampdown, searches, and deportations.
3) oppose police brutality typified by the
Rodney King beating and verdict

Volunteers & Contributions needed.

213-962-8084/Fax: 962-4437

6253 Hollywood Blvd., Ste. 910, LA

[Jason W. Moore is a leading member of the Oregon Committees of Correspondence. An anti-authoritarian socialist, Moore is a contact for the @C in Eugene. The following article is a complete, revised draft of his views on the subject. Information on the Center for Contemporary Activism, of which he is Executive Director, appears elsewhere in this issue of B&R.]

THE U.S. LEFT, YOUTH, & GLOBAL MONOPOLY CAPITALISM

A Center for Contemporary Activism discussion document. June 1993.

By Jason W. Moore

Just what do you say, asked Hunter S. Thompson a few years back, to a generation for whom rain is poison and sex is death? The question, and its implications, challenges the U.S. left to look beyond the grim statistics -- the child poverty, adolescent AIDS, drug addiction, homelessness, "crack babies," petty crime, the dehumanizing schools. If the left is to mobilize youth today and over the long-term, it must recognize that the "crisis of youth" is not just a quantitative crisis, but a qualitative one. It is a crisis manifest in a profound and pervasive alienation from society's dominant institutions, an alienation bordering on a nihilistic rejection of virtually all accepted norms, of both the status quo and left movements.

Trying to get a handle on the political and social consciousness of anything so vast as a generation is unavoidably problematic. Too many abstractions have to be made, and generalizations always have their exceptions. Yet, the left stands to gain considerably by devoting serious thought to the study of youth consciousness, cross-generational politics, and how a generation which has come of age in an era of imperial decline and stagnation can contribute to the on-going reevaluation of left theory and practice.

Underpinning my observations on youth consciousness is an implicit assumption that the alienation and oppression of youth worsen considerably along race, gender, class, and age (children are most victimized) lines; analyzing those oppressive dynamics, however, will have to wait for another article, hopefully very soon.

Even among relatively affluent middle class youth there exists a growing cynicism about politics in general and a creeping uneasiness about the future. For example, at the University of Oregon after verdict from the first Rodney King beating trial (April 1992) was announced, a multi-racial but largely white group of 300 mostly middle class students marched on Eugene's federal building where they proceed to smash thousands of dollars of windows. If the frustration runs this high among youth who are promised relatively bright (or relatively not as dim?) futures, what is it like for young people for whom a college education, or even a decent job, is an impossibility?

Further down the class ladder, the alienation deepens and uneasiness about the future turns to denial -- paeans to opportunity and social mobility are hardly believable in a period of rapid class polarization, economic stagnation, and social disintegration. Poor and growing numbers of middle class youth attempt to escape from the present and deny the future by taking refuge in the ephemeral pleasures of an ultra-commodified culture of licit and illicit recreation. (Although in this context we can speak of "culture" and "recreation only in a perverted way.) The onslaught of commodification progressively destroys the remnants of grassroots culture and transforms recreation into activity that "re-creates" human beings only insofar as it pacifies and prepares them psychologically for life and work in capitalist society. Indeed, recreation has been debased to self-destruction -- sexual promiscuity and drug abuse are only the most glaring examples. This commodification -- and dehumanization -- of socio-cultural consciousness has reached new heights, and youth know (or feel) this better than anyone.

Youth are especially alienated from capitalist society's dominant institutions -- family, education, work, and the state. In each of these areas, mutually reinforcing trends drive youth's social alienation: 1) The breakdown of family support networks due to the social dislocation caused by economic stagnation and globalization; 2) The destruction of public education, and the reproduction of oppressive social relations within schools, which in many areas are little more than armed detention camps; 3) The restructuring of the U.S. working class, home to a growing army of chronically unemployed and underemployed, where the real unemployment rate for youth of color hovers around

fifty percent; and 4) The perceived irrelevance of the state and politics, except in matters of paternalistic assistance (welfare, etc.) or punishment (police and prisons).

Youth alienation prefigures the mass consciousness of the future. The anger, frustration, and hopelessness which characterizes youth consciousness today flow from the structural breakdown of U.S. capitalism beginning in the late Sixties, what Harry Magdoff and Paul Sweezy have aptly described as "the irreversible crisis." Stagnation represents not just economic hard times, but increasingly a social, political, cultural, and even psychological crisis of unprecedented -- and irreversible -- proportions. These crises are felt most keenly, though by no means exclusively, by those born since the mid-1960s. And the crisis of youth under capitalism is no more reversible than capitalism's own collapse. For this reason, a study of youth can serve as a starting point for debating on the one hand the characteristics of, and the left's response to, the emerging mass consciousness of the next century and on the other the reorientation and reconstruction of an organized left pitted against the awesome power of transnational capitalism.

Youth's alienation contains a double movement. On the one hand, youth seem utterly bought off by consumer culture, kept happy and stupid by the goodies capitalism has to offer -- stylish clothes, mindless video games, easily procured drugs and cheap booze, new cars, the ubiquitous MTV television-music-dance-zero-attention-span pseudo-culture. On the other hand, young people -- especially youth of color -- are among the most oppressed in capitalist society. Real wages for youth have plummeted by over a third since the early 1970s, real unemployment and underemployment is outrageously high even by today's standards, child labor law violations more than doubled over the past decade, and the physical terror unleashed against children -- especially girls -- within families has reached unprecedented heights.

This double movement, one encouraging the support or at least acceptance of the status quo, the other undermining that support through sheer desperation, is necessarily unstable. For the U.S. ruling class, the task is clear -- keep the culture industry running smoothly, turn out more Clinton-esque MTV-friendly politicians to woo disaffected middle class students and young suburbanites, and expand the hegemonic-repressive apparatus to pacify poor youth, ensuring that their rage is expressed within "acceptable" norms (like killing each other and drug addiction). When that fails, "persuasion" (however well coerced) always gives way to brute force. The cry for more cops, more prisons, more Order can be heard on the lips of every mainstream politician these days.

The U.S. left faces much more of an uphill struggle (surprise!). Left movements need to find a way to speak to youth, many of whom are so turned off to politics that anything even slightly resembling activism seems a waste of time. Leftists will have to experiment with new organizing approaches to reach young people and be flexible enough to adapt to the new perspectives of younger comrades. The first step is to connect with those young activists -- especially in the high schools -- who can break through the alienation, and connect with the dissatisfaction and anger. While no "youth rebellion" is on the horizon, there are thousands of young activists who would be attracted to an organized left which embodies democracy, empowerment, and personal fulfillment within a militant CULTURE of opposition; that is, movements which seek social and cultural liberation in addition to explicitly political demands, however radical.

Such a renewed and reconstructed left would be more in tune with the ever-deepening irrationalities 1990s capitalism -- a left that emphasizes the PROCESS of transforming social relations at the grassroots over ENDS-based incremental reformism or even radical state-centered strategies. If the left could succeed in such a reorientation, it could very well emerge as a force with great appeal to poor and even many middle class youth; moreover, such a reorientation of the left is necessary if anti-systemic forces are to win the struggle against an increasingly globalized and de-nationalized capitalism.

Just what does this new stage of capitalism -- global monopoly capitalism -- mean for the left, for youth, and for a reorientation towards a grassroots social revolutionary strategy? Any answer is necessarily incomplete. Let us note briefly what appear to be the dominant trends within the emerging global monopoly capitalist order: 1) The growing independence of giant transnational corporations, asserting oligopolistic control over the key sectors of the global economy, from reliance on the state and state protection of markets, at home and abroad; 2) The emergence of transnational power structures, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the International Monetary Fund, which exercise powers historically vested in (primarily) the capitalist nation-states of the core; 3) The transformation of the state from a protector of national markets to a watchman over an increasingly rebellious, and Third World-ized, working class; 4) A global coordination of production, so that the multiplier effect of economic growth, at a local level, is virtually eliminated -- that is, more factories no longer mean more jobs

at the local level; and 5) The constant and imminent threat of stagnation, what Hungarian Marxist Istvan Meszaros recently called the "tendency towards a depressed continuum, where one recession follows another," each one more severe than the last one.

The connections between the global economic situation and U.S. youth can only be made tenuously here. That said, let us take note of the truly vast landscape. First, we are witnessing the transformation of the advanced capitalist state into a compradorized state at the service of transnational capital (experienced by peripheral states long ago). Second, the room for manoeuvre within "civil society" is increasingly limited, a reality underscored by the dismal failure of European Social Democracy over the last decade. Third, even if left movements do succeed in opening up political space, it will be impossible to alleviate capitalist exploitation via the welfare state. The threat of stagnation, and the global consolidation of capitalism, politically and economically, makes impossible any structural response to demands for "humanized capitalism" as it politically insulates capital from those demands themselves.

So what does all this have to do with youth, and how can young people help the left unshackle itself from a pseudo-pragmatic attachment to the "left-wing of the possible"? I believe that youth -- because they have never known anything other than stagnation and social crisis -- are particularly well suited to see that reliance on, and integration into, society's dominant social institutions is a dead end. Young people are, after all, on the cutting edge of global restructuring -- THEY are the ones hit hardest by capital flight (like de-industrialization) and social disintegration (like the destruction of communities) which are the hallmarks of "globalization." The vast majority of young people are not only denied freedom and autonomy in the present, but are denied anything resembling a prosperous future within capitalism. Consequently, they tend to be able to see -- or at least sense at some level -- that "working within the system" is what got us here in the first place. For youth, the answer lies in building new social frameworks OUTSIDE AND IN ACTIVE OPPOSITION TO CAPITALIST SOCIETY which can give people the freedom and autonomy they need if they are to engage in any kind of progressive politics worthy of the name.

For the U.S. left, there is no time to lose. Young people need ways to channel their anger against the status quo, and the left desperately needs new blood and new approaches to political struggle and movement-building as it heads into a new capitalist epoch where all progressive struggles must at once be internationalist and socially-based. Left movements will have to learn to be flexible if they want young people to join. They must be willing to allow younger comrades to serve at every level of leadership and to participate in the organizational and theoretical debates so often monopolized by "leaders" and "experts." Young activists need to be welcomed for their ideas as well as their energy. Above all, the established left leadership must be willing to give up power; more importantly, they must be open to a transformation of traditional organizational norms and practices in favor of innovative approaches to democracy, leadership, and rank-and-file empowerment.

In short, to reach youth the left must break with the accepted ways of organizing, of leading, of debating, and commit itself to the construction of new, profoundly democratic and therefore revolutionary, movements and social institutions. The vast majority of youth simply are not interested in playing what seems to be the same old political shell game. If ANY movement attracts them, it will be a movement committed to grassroots democracy, militant action, and the assertion of power not through the state but through popularly-created social organizations independent of the status quo and all its trappings.

Jason W. Moore is executive director of the Center for Contemporary Activism, a radical youth-oriented research, education, and publishing center devoted to left dialogue and regroupment. The Center can be reached at 206 NW 7th, Corvallis OR 97330 or 503-346-3716. He is deeply grateful to John Bellamy Foster, Diana Gildea, David Jarman, and John William Moore for their criticisms.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONCERNING (OR TO JOIN) THE CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ACTIVISM, CLIP AND SEND WITH \$1 ENCLOSED TO 206 NW 7th, Corvallis OR 97330:

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CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ACTIVISM

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Words like "theory" and "intellectual work" are not popular terms among progressive and radical youth these days. For most left-oriented youth, intellectual work and theoretical concerns are seen as divorced from, or even a barrier to, the practical day-to-day work of building movements for social and economic justice. Activists grouped around the Center for Contemporary Activism hope to show that intellectual work -- and the task of building a radical intellectual culture among youth -- does not have to be academic or dogmatic, socially elitist, self-absorbed, or self-indulgent. We hope to show that the best intellectual work arises out of collective action, and that the only way to develop a radical vision which speaks to the millions of dissatisfied and angry people in this country is to build a culture which seeks, and serves to develop, the ideas of all who oppose capitalism.

The Center for Contemporary Activism is a small but growing national network of young activists committed to revitalizing and facilitating dialogue and debate on the future of left activism and radical theory. For us, intellectual life and activism are tightly interwoven strands in the struggle for a revolutionary transformation of society. If the left is to succeed in replacing capitalism with a more humane and democratic social order, it will be due to its ability to radically reconceptualize a revolutionary praxis -- at every turn we need to look critically not just what we are struggling for, but how we reach those ends. To paraphrase Albert Camus, the real question is not whether the ends justify the means but the other way around. Intellectual work and practical organizing cannot be divorced. Some on the left are inclined to write and do research, while others prefer to organize, but the ideas of all, and the action of everyone, are essential for the success of the revolutionary project.

We are Marxists, anarchists, revolutionary socialists, social democrats, and independent radicals of every stripe. Our differences are many, but we all hold a common desire to build a democratic alternative to capitalism.

The Center's activities include sponsoring conferences and seminars, journal and book publishing, and facilitating networking among the young left activists who share common interests on a wide range of left concerns.

We are currently in the midst of organizing a solid base of activists committed to writing, editing, and networking for *Reinventing Revolution*, a new journal of left dialogue and activism focused on youth and cross-generational politics. We hope that the journal will play a unique role on the left by facilitating dialogue among young activists and scholars from every movement and ideological perspective. *Reinventing Revolution* aims to lend some national cohesion to the debates gripping our movements, all too often limited by geography or a more-or-less narrow political audience. *Reinventing Revolution* realizes left dialogue cannot be limited by nationality, and will feature regular contributions from young leftists around the world. *Reinventing Revolution* and the Center are driven by an unswerving commitment to a flexible, democratic approach to movement-building through facilitating dialogue and debate that is informed and animated by the best traditions of movements for racial and sexual equality, economic and social justice, international peace and solidarity, and cultural liberation.

Ideas, criticisms, and suggestions concerning our work are always welcome.



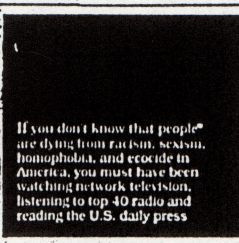
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RED & ANARCHIST SKIN HEADS
BUILD ANTI-FASCIST NETWORK

Red & Anarchist Skin Heads (RASH) have distributed the second issue of their newsletter "RASH Update."

"We sent the initial call for a Red and Anarchist Skin Head network out to about 30 groups," explained Dan, a member of Mayday Skins, a NYC RASH affiliate. "The response was extremely positive. The call, as well as some classified placed in zines such as "Maximum Rock 'N Roll" generated a ton of mail from red and anarchist skins from all over the world! It appears that there are many more of us out there than we originally thought, and we're hoping that people are interested in moving to the next step of getting things off the ground."

RASH has functioning chapters in three cities, and nuclei in several others.

"We in New York are planning on reaching out to the local media to get the word across that not only are all skinheads not racist, but some of us are even progressive," said Dan. "We're planning on hitting up local radio, sympathetic newspapers and much more. After gauging the success of this project, we'll decide where to go next."

Contact: Mayday Skins/RASH-NYC, PO Box 365, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 100130365.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN RAILROADED IN MINNESOTA EIGHT CASE

A.C. Ford, one of eight Afro-Americans indicted for the September 25th shooting of a Minneapolis police officer, was convicted on May 28 for "conspiring" in the cop's murder.

On June 2, the Committee Seeking Equal Justice for the Minnesota Eight protested the conviction. The demonstration, which took place despite harassment by the cops, was held just blocks away from the Pizza Shack restaurant, a police hangout, where officer Jerome Haaf was fatally shot.

Ford, 26, was taken directly from the courtroom to Stillwater State Prison. Volunteer attorneys Peter Erlinder and Jordan Kushner have filed a Motion for Judgement of Acquittal based on insufficient evidence and an unfair trial.

The Eight were arrested after an uneven and abusive police investigation. The police used the unfortunate killing of a Minneapolis police officer as a license to detain, harass and abuse hundreds of African-American men at random. The police ransacked homes of Afro-American community leaders, arrested and harassed attorneys seeking to counsel victims of abuse, and even attempted to intimidate the media from reporting police abuse.

Since the Eight have been brought into police custody, the system is doing no better by them. Bail is excessive, set at \$3 million. The defendants are being denied the counsel of their choice. The prosecution has held up evidence, which has delayed the Eight in developing effective defense. Judges have expressed bias in closed conferences and in open court. Prosecutors have attempted to chill lawyers and members of the Committee Seeking Equal Justice for the Minnesota Eight, a defense group.

For more information on the case, contact: The Committee Seeking Equal Justice for the Minnesota Eight, PO Box 40355, St. Paul, MN 55104.

PATRICK BUCHANNAN ORGANIZES NEO-FASCIST CONFERENCE

Former Republican presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan hosted a May 14-15 conference in Washington, DC to build his new, neo-fascist organization The American Cause. Nearly 400 ultrarightists attended the conclave.

"To take our country back, to make America again a place where all our citizens live together in peace and prosperity, we must embrace the conservatism of the heart," said Buchanan. "We are here today to send a message that the war for the soul of America is not over, that traditionalists have only just begun to fight."

Blasting gays, the left, the media, academics, the underclass, immigrant workers, and other "special interest" groups, he said the aim of The American Cause is "to depollute and detoxify the culture so Middle America can again drink freely from it."

He was joined in his neo-fascist rantings by Congressman John Doolittle from California; Will Perkins, director of the campaign that won a victory against gays in Colorado; Bob Knight from the anti-gay, anti-choice Family Research Council; Ezola Foster of the Black Americans for Family Values; and Jim Warner of the National Rifle Association. Nationally-syndicated columnist Samuel Francis gave a keynote address as did Joe Farah, editor of the right-wing newsletter "Dispatches." Michael Medved, author of "Hollywood vs. America," and Thomas Flemming, editor of the magazine "Chronicles" also put in their two cents worth of bigotry.

Buchanan praised H. Ross Perot as "pointing out the road that the Republican party must travel. And the road sign reads populist, nationalist, Middle American."

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ATTENTION NEW YORKERS:

Get ready for the Fierce Pussy Fest— a Tompkins Square Park concert and a festival of female musicians, dancers, performers, and poets, from 12-7 p.m. on Saturday, August 28th.

The Fierce Pussy Fest will not only be a fabulous party, but also a forum to celebrate female artists. The exchange of ideas and information will ignite a power that won't dissipate when the crowds do. We already know we're oppressed, now is the time to be fierce.

Fierce Pussies have fierce minds. Let's plot to take over the world. The "Conspiracy-In" will begin at noon and the concert at 3. We encourage tables, street theater, and installations, as well as any other creative expression. Bring your literature, your visual art, your drums, your dance, your spells, your snakes, your performance art, your circus act of any sort, your costumes and your imagination.

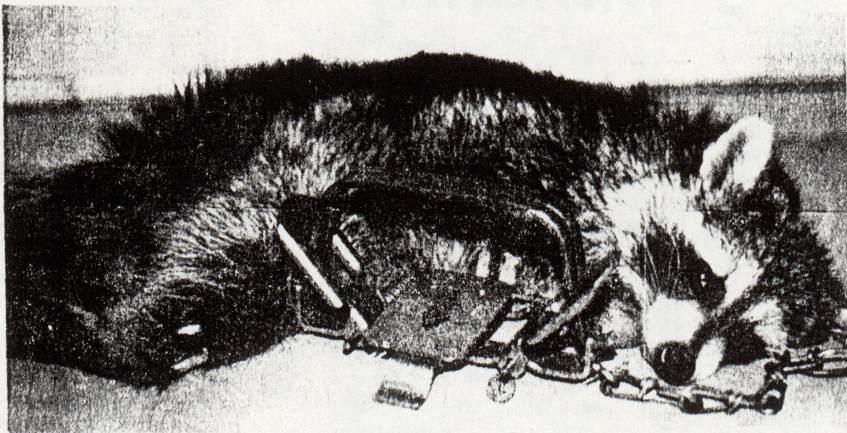
It helps us to plan the event to know who to expect, so phone, fax or write:

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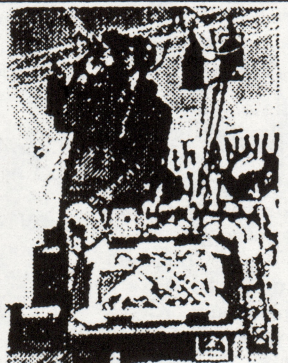
7th Annual Mayday Concert Report:

On May 1st, the Lower East Side Class War Organizer co-sponsored the seventh annual Mayday Class War Concert at Tompkins Square Park on the Lower East Side (L.E.S.) of New York City.

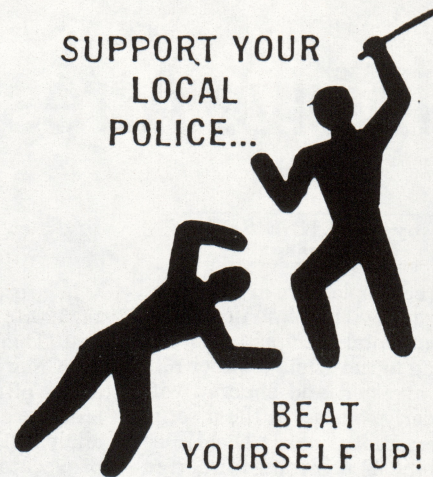
Reggae, rap and punk bands filled the air with songs of defiance and revolution. The variety of bands was well representative of the variety of cultures that co-exist with one another in the L.E.S.

P.A.C. and N.J.A.Y.F. attended the concert, members of P.A.C. set up a Right To Existence book table (something they've been doing at other large events in NJ and NY) and made a lot of great connections as well as selling a modest number of books, pins, and pamphlets.

We look forward to next years event, we'll be there, hope you can be too.



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SUPPORT THE TRENTON 7

On Wednesday June 2nd, a coalition of community organizations from around this state gathered in the city of Trenton in a demonstration of support for a group of prisoners known as the "Trenton Seven." These Black men are on trial in the Mercer County courthouse on charges stemming from a disturbance at the NJ State Prison in Trenton in August of '90. The demo included community enlightenment through a march to the courthouse and attendance of the trial. The day's events were one in a series of actions designed to express support for these victims of the systematic racial, economic and political repression inherent in the U.S. criminal justice system.

Organizations present at the demonstration included the Paterson Anarchist Collective, NJ Anarchist Black Cross, Black Cat Collective, Nightcrawler Anarchist Black Cross, Lower East Side Class War Organizer and Black Panther Newspaper Committee.

For further information, contact "Right to Existence" bookstore, 285 Preakness Avenue, Paterson, NJ; telephone (201) 790-3076.

Twelve Arrested at Community Board Riot

by PAUL KNEISEL
ROSE News Service

Three people were arrested and charged with obstruction of governmental administration and inciting to riot while another nine were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct at the meeting of Community Board #3 held Tuesday, June 22, according to information provided by officers at the Police Department's Deputy Commissioner of Public Information (DCPI) late that evening. The three were given desk appearance tickets while nine received summonses.

Two of the twelve were Community Board members Margarita Lopez and Joyce Ravitz.

Factual Dispute Over Prisoners

All were released, according to DCPI. This report was incorrect, according to information provided by squatter Beth Stimson who spoke by phone with the prisoners. She stated that those arrested on the inciting charge were "run through the system," using the phrase indicating the people were taken to Central Booking to await arraignment and a bail hearing before a judge. (more on DCPI inaccuracies in next issue: ed)

The DCPI office stated the disturbance involved "65 homeless people" but contained "no violence or property damage."

The arrests culminated the weeks-long dispute between Glass House Squat and Pueblo Nuevo, a community group proposing to build an AIDS hospice at the site.

Pueblo Nuevo Plan Behind Immediate Conflict

Committees of the Community Board ruled that Pueblo Nuevo did not have to speak to residents of the squat despite regulations requiring groups to consult with the community. Estelle Rubin, Human Services chair, repeatedly ruled that squatters were not "neighbors."

Earlier Concerns Over Disruption

Threats to evict Glass House squatters made many residents there increasingly nervous. This, coupled with additional reports of undemocratic procedures by various CB #3 chairs, led many to conclude that additional disruption was becoming more likely.

In a previous issue (#14: June 14, 1993), an RNS Editorial stated that "Disruption of procedure by the Chair her- or himself is especially offensive. Such behavior lends credence to one squatter analysis that some Chairs act as provocateurs. Unable to defend the Pueblo Nuevo plan in an open debate, they instead try to produce 'disruption' in order to call in the police and end the citizens' input."

As the disruption started last night, Eduardo "Tito" Delgado, a past President of Met Council on Housing, reported seeing Luis Soler with a video camera recording the squatter activity. Observers familiar with CB meetings report that video cameras are not usual instruments regularly brought to the meetings.

Meeting Before Riot

Normal board procedures begin with a public session where any citizen can speak. Those who went to the meeting were forced to wait in line to fill out a form requesting speaker time. Each form was consecutively numbered and required name, organization, and the reason for wanting to address the board.

The clerk at the door gave out the forms one at a time. Only when the previous person had completed the form and turned it in would another form be given to the next person.

Members of Glass House charged that nobody from their squat was permitted to speak.

When Soler closed the public session several Glass House members were still on the list.

At this point, three supporters of the squat approached the members of the Board requesting that Glass House be permitted to address the body before the Board voted on policies affecting their squat.

Soler Orders People Out

Police immediately moved to the front of the auditorium, appearing to protect the Board members. Other squatters then moved down front to protect their associates from the police.

At this point, Board Chairman Luis Soler announced a ten-minute adjournment and ordered everyone to leave the auditorium. His directive was challenged by

several different groups.

Numerous squatters had short pithy responses.

Several members of the Board immediately pointed out that as Board members they had every right to be there. Others stated that Soler's adjournment ended whatever power he had as the Chair and that only building management could order them to leave.

Soler pointed to Lopez and Ravitz, telling the police to "arrest them," according to attorney Stanley Cohen. This report was confirmed by Chino Garcia, president of CHARAS and Chairman of the Lower East Side Joint Planning Council.

"Soler really told the cops to arrest them. Outright!" Garcia stated.

Both Lopez and Ravitz were appointed by Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger. The arrests came at a time when several board members told RNS that Messinger sent a letter expressing concern for the lack of diversity reflected in Board functioning during Soler's chairmanship. Messinger's liaison was scheduled to read it to the entire Board later that evening.

Chris Mitchell, writing in the June 23 issue of the *Daily News*, stated that Soler "was about to lose a reelection vote [and] ordered police to seize [the] two fellow board members and several squatters.... Soler, who would not discuss the incident last night, has been blamed for contributing to the deep rift on the board."

Several other Board members were critical of Soler's performance that night.

Board Members Critical

Rick Carmen, past Chairman of the Board, said that "you don't start arresting people until you've given them every chance to leave."

Sandra Andersen, of the community-garden oriented Green Guerrillas stated that the next meeting Soler called "will probably be at One Police Plaza," the location of NYC police headquarters.

Andersen indicated that community groups controlling buildings were increasingly reluctant to permit the new Board to meet on their property.

"This is good for the gardens," Andersen jested. "Pretty soon that's the only place the Board will be able to meet. That means they can't close the gardens down," she reported, alluding to one plan to sell the vacant city-owned lots on which the community gardens are built.

Witnesses Dispute Police Claims on Violence

Squatters also disputed police claims that there was no violence.

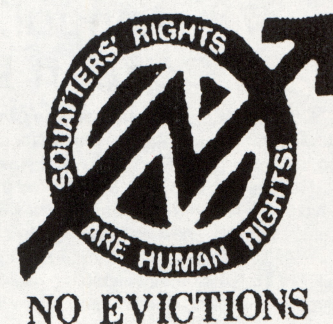
"Maybe we were not violent, but the police certainly were," said one.

Beth Stimson and George Marco pointed to large new bruises on their thighs, biceps, or shoulders where they said they had been struck by police.

Marco also claimed police ripped several silver pendants from his neck during their attack.

Observers of the conflict said police overresponded and that they witnessed many excessive uses of force. One group of witnesses came from the punk movement with their piercings and tattoos. Others wore expensive jogging outfits while a third group dressed in suits and ties. All, without regard to their social position or political views, reported essentially the same thing.

Claims of injuries by those arrested have not yet been confirmed. Police removed them by backing a van up to the door of Cooper Square. All observers, including members of the NY press corp, were moved behind hastily assembled police lines, preventing anyone from getting a close look at the prisoners. ■



April 25 – a march to remember

By John Ratliff

As passengers boarded the Friday, April 21, flight from Miami to Washington, it became clear this flight was different from most. Booked solid for months, the flight – like many others leaving on Friday and Saturday – was packed with travellers going to D.C. to participate in the April 25 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Freedom March.

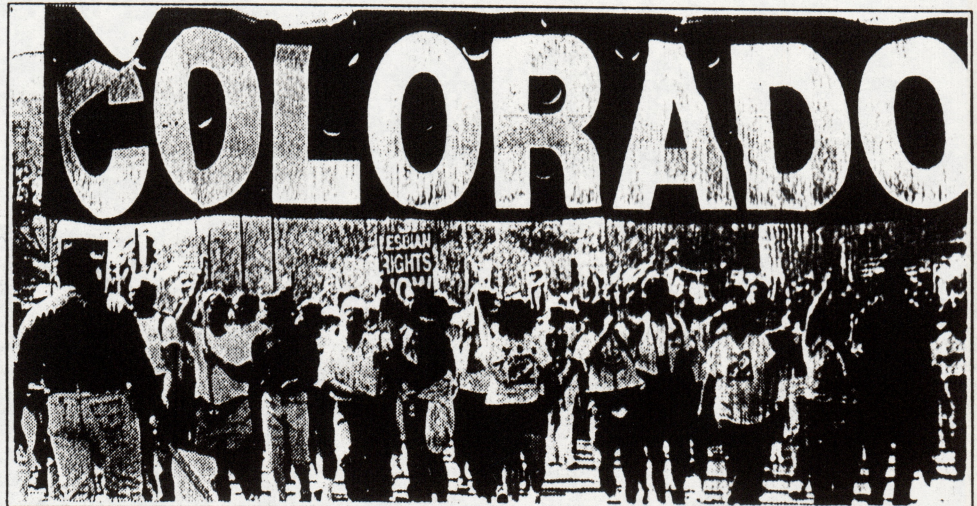
From across the country, hundreds of thousands of people came to Washington, convinced that a crucial juncture was upon them. It was time to be counted – and 1 million gays, lesbians and their supporters came to do just that.

Although the march was still not truly representative of all the lesbian, gay and bisexual people it sought to represent, it was a tremendous step forward compared to many actions which preceded it. Organizers included African American, Puerto Rican, Chicano/a, Native American and Asian leaders of the queer community. And the demands clearly drew the relationship of our struggle for equal rights with the struggle against racism and sexism. Women came in close to equal numbers with men. Straight supporters of an end to homophobia and discrimination took part in significant numbers. Civil rights groups such as the NAACP, NOW and Rainbow Coalition endorsed the freedom march and identified with the struggle for equal rights.

Coming as the issue of lesbians and gays in the military dominated front page headlines and right-wing hate campaigns threatened lesbians and gays in many states, the march was historic.

As usual, the National Park Service police grossly undercounted, claiming only 350,000 attended the march – far below the million expected and the 1.1 million march organizers claimed. The organizers' estimates were far closer to the true numbers. Every hotel and motel room as far out as Baltimore was booked for the weekend. Almost a third of the marchers gave up waiting to march past the White House and crossed the mall to the rally site, after only 60 of the 95 contingents had begun marching by 6 p.m. and bus and plane deadlines became urgent.

The park police estimate was issued



— photo by Joy Brock

at 3 p.m., based apparently on the number in the mall. Objective facts contradicted their count. Over twice as much money was spent in tourist establishments (\$177 million to \$65 million) and over twice as much garbage collected (64 tons to 30 tons) after the march than was true of the '93 inauguration and celebrations, which the park service estimated at 800,000.

Hundreds of events and meetings were organized. Intense peoples' lobbying campaigns took place before and after the march. These events and the rally program reflected the breadth of the organizing effort and of support for the march.

Demonstrations were held by veterans' groups at Arlington Cemetery, the Pentagon, and the Vietnam War memorial. AIDS activists formed a huge chain of protest, several people deep, around the Capitol, demanding better funding to fight AIDS.

The AFL-CIO sponsored a reception for lesbian and gay trade union activists from around the country, and a number of other trade unions and union caucuses organized receptions. On April 26, activists met at SEIU headquarters to plan the first national conference for lesbian and gay trade union activists, to take place in New York in June '94, during commemorations of the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion.

Organizers from various state campaigns met at a "Fight the Right" town meeting, sponsored by the National Task Force, to compare notes on effective strategies to defeat ballot initia-

tives. Other meetings focused on possibilities for progress in Congress, etc.

The coordinators of the CoC task force gave out large quantities of the "Where We Stand" brochure, *Corresponder*, and *Dialogue and Initiative* at the Fight the Right meeting and the AFL-CIO reception. Friendly interest was repeatedly expressed, as was skepticism toward the larger left, which does not enjoy a positive history with the lesbian and gay movement. A number of CoC activists were present at each of the events.

The Washington, D.C., CoC arranged a meeting hall for the CoC task force on short notice in the District Building, but the task force was unable to take advantage of the opportunity because of the many directions members were pulled in and the tardiness in communicating a plan to meet.

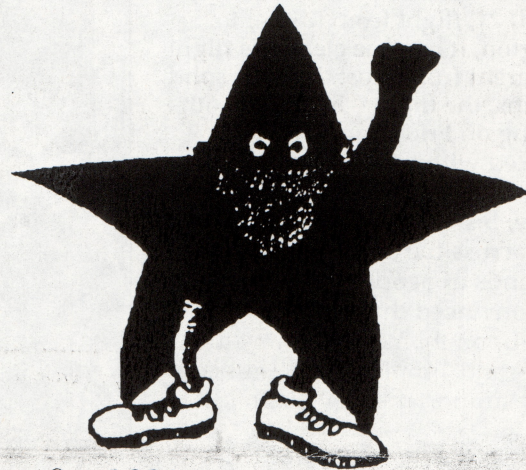
All around the country, organizers plan to build on the success of April 25. The next national action date of a similar size and power for the lesbian and gay movement will be Stonewall 25 in June, 1994. Between now and then the entire movement should be infused with the energy of the million who were there and strengthened by the power that mobilized on April 25 for an event which was "A Simple Matter of Justice" – and much more.

To contact the CoC Gay/Lesbian Task Force, contact John Ratliff, c/o South Florida CoC, P.O. Box 38-1023, Miami, FL 33238, Phone (305) 756-5194, Fax: 756-1766; or Sushawn Robb, c/o CrossRoads, P.O. Box 2809, Oakland, CA 94609, (510) 843-7495.

From: Committees of Correspondence Newsletter – June/July 1993 issue

MAYDAY

TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK NYC



Reprinted from ROSE News Service #13 June 9, 1993

"Mayday Tompkins Square Park NYC:" A Review

by KURT HILL

Anarchist Caucus

Committees of Correspondence

Mayday Tompkins Square Park NYC by Lori Sbordone Rizzo. Foreword by William Kunstler. 174 pp. 8 1/2 x 11 pb. \$15.00 postpaid.

In August 1988, police rioted to enforce a midnite curfew in New York's Tompkins Square Park. Their freakout resulted in the filing of over 100 police brutality charges with the Civilian Complaint Review Board.

It also resulted in the suspension of the curfew—a suspension which was maintained by Tompkins Square activists, homeless persons, and neighborhood residents for nearly three years.

Over the past five years, Tompkins Square has become internationally recognized as a center of resistance for the struggles of homeless people and squatters.

It is known as a literal "Zone of Resistance" to the social policies of the "New World Order."

Lori Rizzo's new book, *Mayday Tompkins Square Park NYC* is a participant's account of a slice of that five-year history. It tells the story of the 1990 *Resist to*

Exist/Squatter Mayday concert.

It recounts how police provocation again turned TSP into a battleground providing eyewitness testimony to how cops stormed the park bandshell in the final moments of a peaceful, four-day concert, igniting a barrage of bottle-throwing.

The confrontation resulted in injuries to 28 cops and the arrest of 29 concert goers. Rizzo was one the several activists indicted by a Grand Jury on felony riot charges. If the four-month trial of the Mayday defendants had been staged in the late '60s or the early '70s, it probably would have made them household names—at least in New York.

But the trial took place during the Reagan/Bush era of reaction; the trial—and the real political and social issues which it posed—was ignored by a mainstream media more interested in its perks than in covering political dissent. Even in the spastic left-wing press, stories on the trial were few and far between.

The fractured Lower East Side activist scene was unable to mobilize a broad-based solidarity movement. Given the relative isolation

of the defendants, it's no wonder that tones of disappointment/bitterness creep into Lori's tome from time to time.

The book is a deeply personal account, and as such, it is sure to be controversial; it is seldom dull.

Like People's Park, its sister struggle in Berkeley, Tompkins Square has its Cast of Characters, and Rizzo introduces the reader to some of them. She calls the shots as she sees them. Some of her profiles are a bit too harsh to my way of thinking, but Lori has never been one to pull her punches.

Rizzo's book is packed with the kind of detail that only a participant can provide. The narrative will no doubt be a sourcebook for any historian interested in the Tompkins Square area's political and social subculture during this period.

Mayday Tompkins Square Park NYC is a "must read" for anyone who has friends or relatives who still believe that political activists are not persecuted in democratic Amerikkka.

To order, send a check or money order (payable to Rizzo) to 271 East 10th St., Box 24, New York, NY 10009.

Past RNS publications include: "On Telling Victims to Accept Victimization" (#1: March 15, 1993, expanded reprint May 15, 1993); "Rome Burns" (#2: April 3, 1993, expanded reprint May 15, 1993); "Poverty's Where the Money Is" (#3: April 25, 1993); "Yuppies Go BANANAS" (#4: April 30, 1993); "Who Polices the Police" (#5: May 7, 1993); "As Neighborhood Struggles Heat Up..." (#6: May 12, 1993); "Squatters Not Neighbors" (#7: May 13, 1993); "Homesteading Family of Five Fights Eviction" (#8: May 19, 1993); "Housing Works Blasts Pagan" (#9: May 21, 1993); "90 Mod on Community Land Trust Proposal" (#10: May 24, 1993); "ROSE Reviews First Ten Issues" (#11: May 26, 1993); and "All-Craft Center Targets Glass House Squat for Development" (#12: June 2, 1993).

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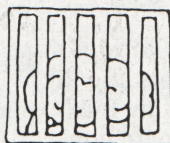
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